

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MINUTES
Regular Meeting
October 21, 2010
Newington Town Hall
5:30 P.M.

I. Roll Call

The following members were present: Chairman Bowen, Mrs. Conway, Ms. Wojtowicz, Mr. Block, Mr. Lenares, Mr. Marcinczyk, Mrs. Nasinnyk and Mr. Bottalico. Also present: Town Planner Edmund Meehan.

II. Minutes

September 15, 2010 Special Meeting – Mrs. Conway moved that the meeting minutes be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Block and approved.

III. Public Participation

Roy Zartarian, 25 Stuart Street, was present and spoke about the activities of the Hartford Audubon Society. The preservation of natural habitats for bird watching was estimated to bring \$50 million of revenue to Connecticut during 2009. The Cedar Mountain range is a large prominent area between the Connecticut River and Farmington River Valley. The Audubon Society conducts a Cedar Mountain inventory of bird counts and identifies unique species. This information may be useful to the Committee when discussing the attributes of Cedar Mountain open space.

Mr. Zartarian will provide a sample inventory list to Mr. Meehan for sharing with the Committee. The Committee could also consider a letter to the Hartford Audubon Society requesting an inventory of the bird count along the Cedar Mountain area in Newington.

IV. New Business – Subcommittee Reports

A. Land Trust Organization

No report. Committee members noted article in the October 10, 2010 Newington Life. (See attached)

B. Open Space Grants and Funding Sources

Ed Meehan mentioned the recent announcements by Governor Rell for several DEP Land and Water Conservation grants as examples of municipal open space projects.

C. Potential Open Space Properties Inventory

Chairman Bowen reported that he and Mr. Meehan met and reviewed the Open Space Inventory report (August 19, 2010) and the GIS mapping presented to the Committee September 15, 2010. One approach to selecting priority parcels is to construct a matrix based on property size, natural resource attributes, significance to adjacent neighborhoods, significance Town wide, consistency to 2020 POCD open space strategies, fiscal impact and additions to existing abutting Town open space.

The purpose of the matrix is twofold: (1) provide feedback to the Council on the Committee's work; (2) give organization to the 649 vacant parcels as to their priority for open space potential protection.

Mr. Bowen felt that the matrix could be shared with the Land Trust for their use and not duplicate work effort.

Mr. Bottalico would like the matrix to also include the property assessed value, as information for future consideration of possible fiscal impact.

The consensus of the Committee was to organize inventory first by parcel size. Ed Meehan will use this criterion as the starting point and create a draft matrix for review.

V. Old Business

A. Cedar Mountain Real Estate Strategy

No discussion.

VI. Public Participation

Jeff Zelek, 55 Welles Drive North, requested information on the Committee's role in designating the field area at New Meadow, approximately 37,000 square feet, for permanent open space. The consensus of the Committee was that this decision is up to the Town Council and Park and Recreation Board.

VII. Remarks by Committee Members

A. Open Space Funding – Town Account

There was a brief discussion of the Committee's role as an advocate for open space acquisition. Ed Meehan mentioned the Town's Land Acquisition Fund account as a means to make incremental set asides for future purchases approved by the Town Council.

B. Balf – Town Committee

Mrs. Conway reported that she attended the Balf-Town Committee meeting. Balf Company representative, Mr. Gilligan, had no information regarding the potential sale of their vacant Cedar Mountain property.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Submitted,

Edmund J. Meehan
Town Planner

Town Clerk
Town Website